



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

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Wednesday, August 4.

At the staff meeting this morning, we got into quite a discussion of Wilbur Mills, as Peterson reported on his current-- the current status of his battles with Mills, and then others got into the problems of dealing with him. The State Department is reported to have invited Mills to participate in the steel negotiations. Mills is planning a Ways and Means Committee junket to the European Economic Community to try to undercut our program of getting some restrictions organized, etcetera. There's a lot of concern about him; most of it seems to be regarding letting him get credit for anything, which of course, the President has said he doesn't care about, that we should go ahead and let him have the credit, won't do us any harm and might even do us some good. We also had some discussion of the plan of the liberal Senators led by Javits, to attack the Administration today on economic policy. Not much we can do to counteract it. It was agreed that Connally would go out-- or would release a statement that whapped them, and he later agreed to read it for television, so that provided our answer.

Then, of course, the President had his press conference, which totally swamped them. We pulled it with no advance notice, at 11:30 this morning. The President spent the morning over at the EOB getting ready for it. The press conference itself went reasonably well. First, the President opened with a statement on Pakistan, said he was sending Rogers to the UN to deal with it, and that shot the ground out from under any questions on that. The next several questions were on the China trip, and that led into the Soviet-Chinese question and SALT. And from there to a couple of questions on Vietnam, and then they got into the economy, and the final eight questions were on the economy. He was prepared for questions on Agnew and his trip, the conservative revolt and the whole busing problem, especially in Texas, but didn't get any on any of these.

He drove Henry right up the wall when he said that he and Gromyko had discussed the possibility of a Summit and had agreed that it would be useful only when there was something substantive to discuss. At this point, Henry practically panicked and a few minutes later left the room. I found out later that that was to call Dobrynin and tell him of this, and explain the



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President was saying it only to put the Russian visit in the proper perspective, versus the Chinese visit. Problem was that the contents of the Gromyko talk have up to now been secret, and it was agreed with Gromyko that they would be. Henry was also terribly disturbed because the President, on the Vietnam question, got into the point that we are very actively pursuing negotiations on Vietnam in established channels, and that the record, when it comes out, will answer the critics. He really slammed them pretty hard on this, and it obviously tipped the press off to the possibility that there was something going on in the way of secret negotiations. Henry feels this is going to undercut his Paris project very seriously.

On the first economic question, he twisted it to get into the Arthur Burns point and made a strong statement that he doesn't have any real differences with Burns, that Burns is the most responsible and statesmanlike of any Chairman of the Fed, and that it was an unfair shot on the salary increase, that Burns had asked that he and others not take a raise at this particular time. This he did to pacify the rumors that we had floated earlier at his instruction, which were designed to stir Burns up a little bit. It was a masterful stroke both ways and should have the net result of getting Burns back in the fold, but on a basis where he won't bang us around so much from now on. After the press conference and a meeting with Connally, President took off for New York, where he had dinner at Tricia's, and then they went to see *No, No, Nannette*.

End of August 4.